

Vistula University

PhD Thesis

**Women in the 10th Pavilion of the
Warsaw Citadel from 1846 to 1914**

(Summary)

Discipline of science: History

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Warsaw, 2026

Summary

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Over the centuries, people who committed criminal offences were imprisoned in various places of confinement. The evolution of the European penitentiary system progressed at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

In the Kingdom of Poland, following the fall of the November Uprising, we can also observe modifications to the prison system introduced by the Tsarist authorities. In addition to imposing Russian culture and consciousness, representatives of the repressive apparatus also sought to eliminate the national liberation movements initiated in the first half of the 19th century by Polish independence activists, which contributed to the transformation of penitentiary institutions on Polish soil.

After 1831, representatives of the Tsarist authorities, wishing to avoid a renewed uprising by the population of the Kingdom of Poland, undertook a series of measures aimed at preventing the organisation of further national uprisings. Control over the population of Warsaw was intended to enable the Russian Empire to maintain the public order established after the insurrectionary fighting. Ensuring stability in this territory involved the introduction of numerous repressive measures against participants in the national uprising and others engaged in anti-tsarist activities.

The Warsaw Citadel was built on the orders of Tsar Nicholas I. The construction of this tsarist fortress in what is now Żoliborz was intended not only to secure the logistical base of the Russian army but also to subjugate the rebellious population. This fortification complex was completed between 1832 and 1834. Among the buildings intended for military use was also the 10th Pavilion, erected between 1826 and 1827. Before being used for measures targeting Polish independence activists, this building served as a uniform store for the barracks of the Crown Foot Guard.

In the 1830s, the building was converted into a central remand prison, and from 1834 onwards, it housed the headquarters of the Permanent Military Investigation Commission. This investigative body was established to investigate the activities of Józef Zaliwski's guerilla group. In later years, the commission became the leading institution responsible for passing sentences on those who committed offences against the public order established by the tsarist authorities.

Within the Kingdom of Poland, there were prisons housing both common criminals and political prisoners. With regard to the latter group, it must be noted that their imprisonment constituted one of the many forms of repression employed by the Russian authorities following the fall of the November Uprising.

As for the anti-government activities of Poles during the January Uprising, it should be noted that they were imprisoned in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. The second location serving as a political prison during this period was Pawiak, which, until the insurrection, had been a facility intended for those imprisoned for criminal offences. In this second building, designed by the architect Henryk Marconi, 'political criminals' were housed due to overcrowding in the aforementioned fortress. It is also worth noting that penitentiary facilities were located not only within Warsaw but also in other cities of the Kingdom of Poland. In the 19th century, Poles were also imprisoned in detention centres within the territories of the other partitioning powers. Prisons, in which both common criminals and those accused of anti-tsarist activities were held, were built and modernised in, amongst others, Płock, Siedlce, Kalisz, Sieradz, Janów, Woława, Wronki, Olsztyn, Sandomierz, Raków, Radom, Chełm, Kielce, Łomża, Piotrków, Lublin and Łódź. In the aforementioned towns, they functioned as municipal, police, transit, and judicial-investigative detention centres.

Following the fall of the January Uprising, members of independence organisations were mostly imprisoned in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel and at Pawiak. From the 1870s, these prisons also became places of confinement for socialist activists associated with newly emerging political parties.

At the beginning of the 20th century, participants in the 1905–1907 revolution were also sent there. According to estimates, around 40,000 prisoners 'passed through' the 10th Pavilion. Until now, these figures have been presented as approximate and have covered all inmates without distinction by gender.

Numerous articles have been written on the fate of the prisoners of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel, describing not only their experiences during their time in the penitentiary but also their independence-related activities. Upon analysing the relevant literature, it must be noted that the only bibliographic work presenting a collective portrait of the inmates of this tsarist fortress is Stefan Król's monograph *Cytadela Warszawska. X Pawilon – carskie więzienie polityczne (1833-1856)*. In this publication, the researcher presented descriptions of the prisoners' cells, sanitary and dietary conditions, as well as

the issue of sentences and the system of repression applied to members of national liberation movements during the reign of Ivan Paskievich, Governor-General of the Kingdom of Poland.

It is also worth noting that S. Król claimed that no women involved in underground activities within independence organisations in the 1840s were held in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. However, later findings, published in the works of other researchers, have undermined the thesis put forward by this historian.

Despite the emergence of new research findings, no monograph has yet been written on the fate and lives of the female prisoners held in this tsarist fortress between 1833 and 1914. Several articles have been written on the female prisoners of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel, covering the fields of biographical studies, prison history and women's history; however, these did not cover all the female prisoners held during the aforementioned period.

This doctoral thesis addresses a subject that has not yet been comprehensively studied. The subject of this research is the case of women held in the 10th Pavilion between 1846 and 1914. The timeframe is determined by the first imprisonment of a woman in this location, and by the fact that the Warsaw Citadel was under the rule of the Russian Empire during the period in question, and was occupied by the Germans in 1915.

On the basis of the considerations set out in the four chapters of this work, an attempt has been made to discuss the role of the investigative and judicial bodies established by the tsarist authorities, which decided the fate of women involved in independence and revolutionary organisations.

In the subsequent sections of the dissertation, I have focused on presenting a classification of the offences committed by the female prisoners of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel between 1846 and 1914, as well as on presenting the results of research concerning the system of punishment applied to female detainees in this tsarist fortress in the 19th and early 20th centuries. An important aspect of these considerations is also the issue of dietary and sanitary conditions, which affected the health of the female prisoners of the 10th Pavilion.

Beginning with the first part of the dissertation, it should be noted that it presents the origins and significance of the construction of the aforementioned tsarist fortress. This topic has been presented in a concise manner, given the numerous studies carried out by other historians. In addition to monographs devoted to the history of this fortification

complex, I also made use of archival sources held in the New Records Archive within archival collection *Cytedla Warszawska. X Pawilon – zbiór akt*.

Furthermore, I discussed issues related to the conversion of the aforementioned building into a cell block prison and also focused on describing the role of investigative, judicial and military authorities involved in passing sentences and making decisions concerning women imprisoned in the 10th Pavilion between 1846 and 1914.

During the inter-uprising period, alongside the repression directed against members of the patriotic elite, the process of unifying the Kingdom with the Russian Empire was also underway across Polish territories. The tsarist authorities introduced changes to the administration and the monetary system, and renamed the provinces as governorates.

Focusing on the cases of prisoners in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel, it is worth highlighting the issue of legal amendments that took place in 1847 following the introduction of a new criminal code. Chapter I also presents the legal system in force in Polish territories during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The provisions of the 1847 Code of Principal and Corrective Punishments were analysed, which set out the types of punishment prescribed for political offences. This casuistic collection of criminal provisions was amended by the tsarist authorities in 1876 and 1885. In 1903, the Tagantsev Code was in force in the Russian partition.

These legal documents were subject to change due to the development of independence movements. Despite their meticulous detail, few of these provisions concerned women in the strict sense. An interpretation of the articles contained in the aforementioned collections of legal provisions reveals the extent of the consequences for committing a prohibited act. Taking into account the subject matter of this doctoral thesis, in my analysis I have focused on the examination of legal provisions concerning the commission of political offences.

Imprisonment in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel was the first stage of the punishment meted out to patriotic activists. On the basis of provisions in the criminal codes and documentation from investigative and judicial authorities, it is possible to determine what types of repression were applied against participants in national liberation uprisings, the revolutions of 1905–1907, and representatives of socialist parties.

Chapter II of the doctoral thesis concerns the classification of crimes committed by female prisoners of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. The subject of analysis in this part of the work will be the activities of the female detainees, which, according to the tsarist authorities, led to the destabilisation of public order. Based on an interpretation of

the available source material in the form of archival sources, publications, historical documentation and the memoirs of participants in the independence movement, it can be concluded that between 1846 and 1914, women were sent to this tsarist fortress for: membership of patriotic organisations and political parties; maintaining contact with insurgent units and distributing illegal publications; engaging in propaganda activities; attempting an assassination or murder; and possessing and storing explosives and weapons. The above list illustrates the wide range of prohibited acts for which women were tried by the Tsarist authorities. Chapter II of the thesis presents a classification of the crimes committed by female prisoners. The discussion in this part of the thesis outlines the various forms of women's involvement in the struggle against the invader.

The main source material used in this doctoral thesis is the file of prisoners held in this fortress between 1833 and 1925. The collection of personal files is housed in the Museum of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. The documentation prepared by the staff of this cultural institution is a valuable source material.

It contains information on the prisoner's basic personal details: first name and surname, alias, date of birth and date of death. The detailed data presented in the personal files specify the place, date and reason for arrest, as well as the type and length of the sentence. On the reverse sides, there are short biographies of the detainees, as well as the sources used.

An analysis of the records in the file of detainees from X Pavilion reveals that the research team working on this collection drew upon archival materials, printed sources, monographs devoted to the activities of participants in the January Uprising and representatives of the labour movement, periodicals from the 19th and 20th centuries, and memoirs. Research was conducted in Polish and Russian archives.

The personal files contain information compiled on the basis of the memoirs of prisoners of this tsarist fortress. Prior to the establishment of the Museum of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel (the museum opened in 1963), in addition to the aforementioned research into the fates and lives of the detainees, staff also attempted to locate independence activists who were alive at the time and had been held there during the Tsarist era. In this way, documentation was compiled, among other things, concerning the stay of Józefa Jarża-Mieczkowska. A letter sent by the activist of the Polish Socialist Party contains a description of her arrest, trial, as well as the sanitary and dietary conditions prevailing in this tsarist prison in 1907.

The prisoner records of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel contain biographies of individuals from various social backgrounds and political groups. The personal files include individuals who took part in anti-tsarist activities both within and outside Polish territory. Taking into account the content of this documentation, it can be concluded that the source material was sometimes limited by the availability of sources, as evidenced by the sparse data on some of the prisoners recorded in this collection.

Information on the target group – namely, women who were detained here for their independence or revolutionary activities – was drawn from this documentation. The research carried out shows that the majority of inmates in 10th Pavilion were men.

The prisoner records have been divided into several periods of the fortress's operation: the Paskievich era (1833–1860); the period of the January Uprising (1861–1872); the development of capitalism in the Kingdom of Poland (1873–1904); the period of revolution in Polish territories, including the subsequent years of political party activity (1905–1914). It is also worth noting that this documentation includes personal files of inmates held here after 1914. It is an interesting source of information, but this collection has not yet been catalogued in detail.

The sources have been verified to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in the personnel files. In addition to the relevant literature, the memoirs and diaries of inmates, and press reports, I conducted archival research at the Central Archives of Historical Records, the State Archives in Warsaw – Milanówek branch, and the Archives of Modern Records.

These are materials produced by investigative, judicial, military-police and administrative bodies such as the Permanent War Investigation Commission, the Provisional War Investigation Commission, the General Police Commissioner's Office, the Field Audit Office of the Armed Forces of the Kingdom of Poland, the Office of the Governor-General of Warsaw, the Warsaw Provincial Gendarmerie Command, the Assistant to the Governor-General of Warsaw for Political Affairs, and the Prosecutor of the Warsaw Court of Justice.

The documentation of the above-mentioned institutions contains reports from investigative bodies, court judgments, correspondence between military and police authorities, and weekly lists of prisoners in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. The New Records Archive contains a collection of questionnaires prepared by the Association of For-

mer Political Prisoners. The questionnaires were completed, among others, by former female prisoners of the Tsarist fortress. Analysis of this documentation has made it possible to confirm the presence of certain women at this location.

It should also be emphasised that some important source materials concerning the activities of the political repression authorities are held in Russian archives. Due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, it is not possible to conduct research on within Russia. Analysing the documentation, which is mainly located in Moscow and St Petersburg, could expand upon the considerations set out in Chapter II, as well as supplement the records of the prisoner files of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel.

Chapter III of the doctoral thesis concerns the types of punishment imposed on women imprisoned in 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel between 1846 and 1914. In classifying the repressive measures applied to female detainees at this fortress, I also drew upon the resources of the prisoner records. As in the second part of the work, I verified the records from the women's personal files. An analysis of the classification of repressive measures applied to female prisoners in the remand centre reveals disproportionate sentences imposed on independence and revolutionary activists. The punishments meted out for acts of minor social harm were disproportionate to the crimes committed.

During the Paskevich era, the tsarist authorities downplayed women's involvement in independence organisations. As a consequence of this treatment, female detainees received lighter sentences than men. The situation changed following the outbreak of the January Uprising. It was then that women began to be exiled to the European provinces of Russia and to Siberia. It is also worth noting that this form of punishment was sometimes combined with the deprivation of privileges and hard labour in factories.

Many executions of prisoners from the 10th Pavilion were carried out on the slopes of the Warsaw Citadel. It should be noted that death sentences were not carried out on women held in this tsarist fortress between 1846 and 1914. Towards the end of the 1870s, administrative procedures were used to enforce punishment against those committing political offences, meaning that independence activists could be punished without a trial.

Taking into account the findings of Chapter II, it must be concluded that the significant participation of women in anti-tsarist activities contributed in later years to changes in the system of repression. It is also worth noting that the consequences of committing a prohibited act were imposed with greater severity following the fall of the January Uprising, a development driven by the ongoing process of russification.

In Chapter III, I discussed the issue of deportation to Russian and Siberian provinces, as well as other punishments and preventive measures applied by the tsarist authorities against female prisoners. It is also worth noting that women held in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel were sometimes exempted from the next stage of their sentence. Some of them had to endure the hardships of imprisonment in two different prisons. This procedure was practised particularly in the 1880s. Many female activists were imprisoned not only in the aforementioned tsarist fortress, but also in the Warsaw Women's Prison 'Serbia' – the women's wing of Pawiak Prison. For some women, both their time in prison, the journey in stages to Siberia, and the serving of hard labour ended tragically. I am referring here to female prisoners who died due to poor health and the physically debilitating conditions of exile.

It is also worth noting that in parts II and III of the doctoral thesis, I presented the research findings regarding the classification of offences committed by female prisoners of the 10th Pavilion and the penalties imposed using a quantitative method, resulting in over a dozen tables showing the numbers of female inmates, the types of offences and the repressive measures applied against members of independence and revolutionary organisations. Returning to the research methodology employed in this doctoral thesis, I also made extensive use of the inductive method – which enables conclusions to be drawn based on the interpretation of archival and printed sources, as well as diaries and memoirs.

The final chapter is devoted to the sanitary and dietary conditions that prevailed in this central remand prison between 1846 and 1914. In order to present a broader picture of this issue, I have described the furnishings of the prison cells, the food rations served to inmates and their composition, access to sanitary facilities, and basic personal hygiene provisions. It should be emphasised here that the conditions prevailing in the tsarist prisons made it impossible for prisoners to lead a normal life.

The treatment of prisoners constituted one of many forms of repression employed by the tsarist authorities against political prisoners. The final section of the doctoral thesis also contains descriptions of the daily lives of female prisoners held in this prison and the factors influencing the development of mental illness in some of them.

In addition to the above-mentioned issues, in Chapter IV of this doctoral thesis I also focus on the treatment of women during interrogations conducted by investigative authorities and during body searches. An analysis of memoirs reveals that the military police serving at this penitentiary and members of the investigative commissions subjected women to psychological and physical abuse. To present the research findings on the above

issues, I have drawn on the memoirs and letters of female prisoners of 10th Pavilion, who were incarcerated at various times during the facility's operation. These include the recollections of Jadwiga Prendowska, Julia Freyer, Zofia Dzierżyńska, Józefa Jarży-Mieczkowska and Bronisława Waligórska. Unfortunately, no memoirs written by female prisoners describing the conditions in the 10th Pavilion during the governorship of Ivan Paskievich in the Kingdom of Poland have been published to date; therefore, in addressing this issue, I have interpreted the accounts of Wincenty Migurski, Henryk Kamiński and Maksymilian Jatowt.

In describing the situation and living conditions of women imprisoned in the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel between 1846 and 1914, in addition to memoirs, I have also drawn upon academic studies in the fields of penology, psychology, medicine and psychiatry.

The above research findings concerning women's involvement in political, independence and revolutionary activities between 1846 and 1914, for which they were imprisoned in this tsarist fortress, do not fully exhaust the issues raised. It is worth recalling here that a year after the outbreak of the First World War, when the civil authorities and the Russian army withdrew from Warsaw, the Citadel came under German control until 1918.

The prisoner records of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel, which constitute a valuable source of information and have served as the basis for the considerations presented here, are, however, worth noting: despite all their merits, there is no doubt that they do not constitute a complete collection. Gaps concerning the imprisonment of some of the female prisoners have been noted in the findings of research on the types of crimes committed by women and the classification of punishments applied by the tsarist repressive apparatus.

These gaps, linked to the lack of information regarding the imprisonment of certain female activists and the circumstances of their stay in the Citadel, provide a basis for further research. In order to carry out further work on the fates and lives of the female prisoners of this tsarist fortress, the author should collect data on the activities of female detainees from national liberation and revolutionary movements. Undoubtedly, the source material collected could in future contribute to the presentation of new research findings concerning the lives of female prisoners after they left the walls of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel. To achieve this aim, it would be necessary to go beyond the chronological scope of the doctoral thesis, which covers the years 1846–1914.

It is worth emphasising here that in subsequent stages of research on this subject, the author of this thesis should take into account the activities of members of the Polish Military Organisation. In 1914, whilst still under Russian rule, women who had participated in this underground movement were sent to the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel for carrying out tasks arising from their involvement in it. These matters could be better understood through archival research at the Central Military Archives.

Further research into the fate and lives of these women should focus on further searches at the aforementioned archive centre, which would help to identify not only a greater number of female prisoners held in this fortress but also male prisoners.

Following an analysis of the records of the 10th Pavilion of the Warsaw Citadel, it must also be noted that further work on this documentation should be continued. Given the multifaceted nature of the project, a research team should be established to carry out tasks related to filling gaps in the records. In the future, this could serve as the basis for the publication of several volumes of biographical dictionaries of prisoners. Apart from presenting the research findings in this manner, another way of making this documentation accessible is to create a digital version of the card index, which could serve as supporting material for historians in the future.

It is worth reiterating here that research to date on this subject indicates that the estimated number of inmates in the 10th Pavilion amounts to as many as approximately 40,000 detainees. Bearing in mind that 15,386 prisoners held between 1833 and 1925 have been classified to date, it must be noted that this work requires the author to continue recording the individuals held at this location.

The research outlined above could, in the future, contribute to the development of further interdisciplinary projects by other researchers. Based on the findings of this doctoral thesis, it can be concluded that the issue of women imprisoned in this tsarist fortress should expand the horizons of academic disciplines such as 19th- and 20th-century history, biographical studies, the history of the prison system, and women's history.